

No. R-284. Joint resolution expressing gratitude for the outstanding service of social workers employed at the Department for Children and Families.

(J.R.H.18)

Offered by: Representatives Ram of Burlington, Pugh of South Burlington, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Cole of Burlington, Conquest of Newbury, Devereux of Mount Holly, Evans of Essex, Fagan of Rutland City, Feltus of Lyndon, Forguites of Springfield, French of Randolph, Grad of Moretown, Helm of Fair Haven, Hooper of Montpelier, Jerman of Essex, Johnson of South Hero, Keenan of St. Albans City, LaClair of Barre Town, Lanpher of Vergennes, Martin of Wolcott, Mrowicki of Putney, O'Brien of Richmond, Pearce of Richford, Pearson of Burlington, Sullivan of Burlington, Sweaney of Windsor, Townsend of South Burlington, Trieber of Rockingham, and Troiano of Stannard

Whereas, social work is a profession designed to help families and individuals navigate the crises or major changes in their lives, and

Whereas, social workers are trained to anticipate emotional and potentially sensitive situations among their clients, and

Whereas, social workers develop professional, yet undeniably personal, relationships with their clients, and

Whereas, the Department for Children and Families (DCF) employs social workers who are assigned to cases throughout Vermont and they are confronted with an ever-expanding caseload, while simultaneously encountering an increasingly confrontational environment of verbal and physical hostility, and

Whereas, the recent challenging difficulties in the working environment of these outstanding and hard-working State employees reached a tragic nadir on Friday, August 7, 2015, when veteran DCF social worker, Lara Sobel, was killed in the parking lot outside the City Center office building in Barre, and

Whereas, the news of Lara Sobel's tragic death shocked the sensibilities of Vermonters, and

Whereas, the Agency of Human Services is deeply aware of the increasing complexity and security threats of DCF social workers' caseloads, and

Whereas, threats to the physical safety of DCF social workers, in combination with increasingly large caseloads, hinders their ability to protect Vermont's children, and

Whereas, DCF social workers are essential to the well-being of many Vermont families and they deserve respect and to be treated with human decency, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses gratitude for the outstanding service of social workers employed at the Department for Children and Families, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Department for Children and Families Commissioner Ken Schatz.